

CITY OF JERSEY CITY

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MAYOR HEALY ANNOUNCES NEW YOUTH MENTORING INITIATIVE IN JERSEY CITY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS

JERSEY CITY -- Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy and the Municipal Council, in partnership with **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Essex, Hudson, and Union Counties** will announce the launch of **Jersey City as a Mentoring City** at **10:00 a.m. on Friday, January 23, 2009**, City Hall Council Chambers, 280 Grove Street.

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) is the oldest, largest and most effective youth mentoring organization in the United States and has been the leader in one-to-one youth service for more than a century, developing positive relationships that have a direct and lasting impact on the lives of young people. Big Brothers Big Sisters serves children, ages 6 through 18, in communities across the country to build positive relationships between youth and their mentors.

“Taking the time to mentor a young person is a rewarding and enjoyable activity that has the power to change a child’s life forever,” said **Mayor Healy**. “Together with the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Essex, Hudson, and Union Counties, our local community and businesses, this program can be a powerful tool in helping to redirect the lives of young people throughout Jersey City.”

Mentoring programs such as these enable children to become more confident in their schoolwork performance and attendance, enhances relationships with their families, and prevents children from using illegal drugs and abusing alcohol.

The **City of Jersey City** and **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Essex, Hudson, and Union Counties** entered a partnership to recruit youth mentors among City employees and from communities throughout the City. A number of employees of the City of Jersey City have signed up to explore mentoring opportunities with Big Brothers Big Sisters.

“I have never underestimated the generosity of our city employees,” **Mayor Healy** continued. “There is a real opportunity here to fill the need for mentors with quality volunteers from our city’s dedicated workforce. Adult mentors can dramatically and favorably alter a young person’s achievement level in school and in life, so I would urge our employees and citizens to take a closer look at committing some of their time to assist our youth through mentoring.”

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This program has been made possible with the financial support of the Simon Foundation who provided \$100,000 as seed money for the Jersey City installation, the Jersey City Housing, Economic Development and Commerce through a Community Block grant donated \$25,000 and United Way donated \$25,000.

Incorporated in 2000, the **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Essex, Hudson, and Union Counties** were the fundraising arm of BBBS agencies throughout NJ. As of January 2008, they took over a Newark agency and expanded to include Essex, Hudson & Union Counties.

It takes about 30 to 60 days to get matched to a child due to background screening and the training process. In the pipeline, BBBS has 40+ mentors getting trained and prepared from St. Peter's College and about 15 who have signed up through City Hall.

It is the goal of **Big Brothers Big Sisters** to serve 650 kids throughout all three counties by the end of the year, of which 150 will come from Jersey City.

All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy at 201-547-4836 or 201-376-0699.///